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CATHERINE, AND OTHER POEMS

CATHERINE

AND

OTHER POEMS

BY

JAMES ALFRED GORNALL

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Slight as thou art, thou art enough to hide
Like all created things secrets from me,
And stand a barrier to eternity;
And I, how shall I praise thee well and wide
From where I dwell, upon the hither side?
Thou little veil for so great mystery,
When shall I penetrate all things and thee,
And then look back? For this I must abide
Till thou shalt grow and fold and be unfurled
Literally between me and the world;
Then shall I drink from in beneath a spring,
And from a poet's side shall read his book;
O daisy mine, what will it be to look
From God's side even of such a simple thing.

"*Sonnet to a daisy*," *Alice Thompson.*

861831

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CATHERINE.

IN TWO PARTS.

INSCRIBED

WITH ALL DEVOTION AND REVERENCE

TO

H. N.

1877.

Yet talk not of wasted affection.

CATHERINE.

PART I.

Old Caleb could not die in peace until
His daughter promised him she ne'er would wed
One whom the girl, alas, had learned to love :
"For child," he said, "my soul may know no peace
Unless this little last request you grant."
From Catherine's eyes the tears fell thick and fast,
And ere he breathed his last she kissed him thrice :
"Dear father, I shall never wed," she cried ;
"Nay, Kate, I wish not that. Wed whom thou wilt,
But wed not him."
Again she turned and kissed
Him, and again his earnest wish he seemed

Fain to repeat; but blessing her his sight
Grew dim, and forth the spirit passed.

'Twas summer, and the days were at their length,
When by the open window Catherine sate.
Two months have now elapsed since from the house
Her father's clay was borne, and since that time
She has but seldom stepped beyond the door;
And on this summer evening those who view
Her face will see the traces of deep grief
About the mouth, and 'neath the yearning eyes.
She loved her father dearly, and his loss
Felt much. His parting wish was also pain
To her, and as his memory she adored
Far far too much to entertain a thought
Of disobedience, she felt at times
That all her hope of happiness was blighted.

Oft-times she from restless sleep awoke
And turning on her tear-stained pillow, cried :
" O father, would that heaven had spared thee, Charles
Had shown thee that his worth was not too slight
For me, but far too great. What villain was it
Told thee such lies that even his very name
Was hateful to thee ? Whosoe'er it be
May God forgive."

Such bursts of grief as this
Kate knew for long. Thro' all her life she ne'er
Had known the wish that might not be supplied.
Her mother dying ere she learned to lisp,
Beneath a fond, indulgent father's care
Scarce armed for worldly trials she'd grown up.
But now poor Kate must learn life's cruel ways,
And presently grew tranquil, taking her
Sad heart to task. She went about the house,
And talked with friends, who soon rejoiced to see
The smile come back upon her pale, thin cheek.

The strife was hard, and once she left her friends,
And flying to her room, a smothered cry
Broke from her as she hid her face among
The pillows, wailing words half-heard about
Her father's dying wish. But earnest prayer
And thought diverted had effect with time,
And to her sad young heart came peace.

'Twas summer, and the days were at their length;
Kate by the window sate; a letter, whose
Unbroken seal would augur trifling worth,
Beside her. Far from trifling was its worth
To her, although it thus neglected lay.
Six had she so received from him since when
'Twas known that they must part forever, nor
Had answered one, nor ev'n had opened one.
To him 'twas cruel pain thus to be used;
To her 'twas far more cruel pain to use
Him thus. She knew him safe and well from that
Her friends, who were his friends likewise, could tell.

But for this fact the seals she would have broke,
And read his loving anxious words, although
Her heart had bled and broken with the deed.

How changed her will from three short months ago :
His letters then were opened with all speed,
And with her cheek aglow 'twixt happiness
And maiden bashfulness, read and re-read,
Until their contents were as much her own
As erst they had been his. Ah, well could she
Recall the time when first she knew his love,
In sooth the happiest moment of her life.
And yet, 'twere best that moment ne'er had been,
Since bitterness alone was of its fruit.
A shy, sweet girl of eighteen summers she,
And tall, and dark, and handsome, with her eyes
And long eye-lashes bearing in each glance
A world of music. Thrice she met with him,
Charles Maurice, when they visited with friends,
And looks half told what words scarce need reveal.

The moon was full upon that happy eve,
And by the gate, and 'neath the whispering trees
She paused, ere bidding him good-bye, to end
The little anecdote, not yet all told,
Then laughing placed her hand in his. A thrill
Of sweet excitement filled her heart when she
Looked up and met that earnest, loving glance,
And heard the tale that needs no writing here.

But still, 'twere best such moment ne'er had been,
Since bitterness alone was of its fruit:
Her father hearing that which had no proof
Against her lover's fame implored of Kate
No more to think of him. And thus our tale.

A friend at her request now wrote to him
And told him that she ne'er could tell herself,
And begged that he for both their sakes would not
Come near for many months, nor write again
To her, since what must be, must be, alack!

Yet still remembrances they might exchange
Through friends. Of this he would not hear, but still
Wrote on, and soon her cousin told to her
The day, the hour, on which he would arrive.

And now we find her on this summers' eve
In tremor wondering what to do or say
When he, her choice of all, should come to her,
And with his dear-loved voice should speak her name.

But soon she 'gan repeating to herself,
And conning o'er each word that she would say,
And sat in attitude as though he stood
Before her now, and she were telling him :
At length such strength was given unto her heart
She almost marvelled at her recent dread.

'Tis done, 'tis o'er, and she has told him all ;
Her oft-repeated lesson she has said :

No dangerous tender word crept in, nor did
She falter once. He spoke but once—her name.
She, staring with fixed look into his face,
Held out her hand and straight began to speak.

A sigh came from his heart when she had said,
And with an anxious, troubled, lingering glance
Into her marble face he rose to go.
One hand is on the door; he turns again
To look upon his Catherine's face and form.

She has not moved. Her hands lie on her lap;
Her face as white and hard and cold still turned
Him toward. He stepped to her, and stooping kissed
Her brow. She moved not, only said
"Goodbye,"
And forth he went, half wondering if the girl
Had ever loved him as he'd fondly thought,
And with each footstep sounding on his ear
So strange he wondered if he dreamed.

Kate moved not till the outer door was slammed ;
Then stepped across the room and sate upon
The music stool, and with her fingers o'er
The keys struck thence weird chords that scarce would
seem
To harmonise with what she sung : her voice
So hard and strange none could have sworn it hers.

And who had made that song ? Was it the child
Of her sad heart and her sad thoughts ?
'Twas all of love, that love there none could be
But lightly one might play or smile away.

Her voice died out, but still her fingers moved
Along the keys, and wandering in the theme
She strayed into the minor, playing still
More softly, till at length the notes refused
To answer to her touch. She left her seat,
And passing to the window looked abroad.

Her lover still was moving through the trees,
And when her vacant glance fell on his form
A change came o'er her face. A shudder ran
Through all her frame, and wailing grief and woe
She thrust her slender fingers in her hair,
And hid her sad young face.

CATHERINE.

PART II.

"At times how strange it seems to be alive;
O how the tears will well and strive to break
Beneath these aching eyes. This weary heart,
Heaven, how at times 'twill hunger for the days
It may not know again. And yet the while
'Twould rather burst than turn to what is past,
Since what must be, must be. Think her who writes
No craven, one whose soul must sink beneath
Life's task; for now, as in the past, where God
The nature sensitive hath given he gives
Pride, jealous pride, and that will conquer fate."

Thus wrote poor Catherine to her loving friend;
Thus, after one sad week had dragged away,

Wrote Catherine to her anxious friend. How brave
Her letter seems when first 'tis conned. How strange
When studiously again we read. Here breathes
No resignation ; here for Kate no peace
Is shadowed forth. Her letter speaks of tears,
But tears there are none. Then in manly phrase
She writes of pride and boasts of conquering fate.

Alas ! But now 'tis time we somewhat spake
Of him who sadly left her sad. He went
With steps all firm and long. Between his teeth
The live cigar he thrusts, and walks amid
A thickly blown, albeit fragrant, cloud.
And home he went, nor moved abroad for days ;
Then forth he stepped in silence, nor would talk
With any whom he met. A faithful dog,
Of breed St. Bernard, trotted by his side ;
And still would glance in wonder, half in fear,
To meet that downcast eye, which once did turn
Full often to his doggish look responsive,

Anon he wandered to his club, and stared
At newspapers, and turned o'er magazines ;
For answer all to question or remark
Full short and something cold he spoke, and scarce
Within the bounds of courtesy. His friends
Glanced toward him with raised eyebrow, and in turn
Ceased to disturb him.

So the months dragged on,
And spring came round, and presently 'twas told
That Maurice soon would leave his native land,
And that the day was fixed when he should sail.

And this was so. His face grew something bright,
And tokens of the wonted mood returned.
His faithful dog rejoiced to hear his voice,
And in the streets he paused with friends, and talked
Of lands afar which soon he hoped to see.
None asked wherefore he went ; some guessed the truth,
And knew that love was in the mischief ; some

Ascribed his mood to disappointed hope
In uncle's will, and some to other cause.

The Fates hung o'er our hero, shook their heads,
And silently, albeit sorrowful,
Decreed that he should never sail.

He rose
Full early on the morn before that one
On which he meant to leave, and leave for aye.
No sleep that night had come to him, and from
His heart there rose a longing, when the sun
Stole in his room, to wander through the lanes,
And through the fields and woods that he for years
Had loved. The month was May, young May,
And forth he went with throbbing breast to greet
The morn. Strange feelings crowded on him now,
And memories tumultuous. From his heart,
O'er-pent, the silent tear would come despite

His bravest will. The morning sky, so beautiful,
The fragrant air so full of eloquence,
And all the laughing clouds, did move his soul.
All through the fields and lanes he stepped, and stood
Upon a little height.

O glorious view!
It seemed to him the world had rolled away
From out her usual course into a pure,
A happier far and brighter region than
That she had left had ever seemed. The clouds,
If clouds they might be called, like clouds in shape,
Yet seeming composed not like to clouds, but of
Material ne'er to be transformed, to float
About the sky, a sky unchangeable,
In happiness and peace for aye; how sweet
They smiled on all the earth, which breathless stood
Amazed to find itself in such a realm;
The heavens the while smiled sweetly on them both,
Both earth and clouds. The trees stood looking up

With timid gaze, and trembling in surprise,
While scattered houses seemed to ask each other
What meant it all? The brook purled swiftly down
As if, it seemed, 'twould flee away to hide,
Then paused and stood, motionless almost,
Surveying all around. Naught save the birds
Appeared to be at home; these busy things,
Bustling, chirping, singing, raised the thought
That by some feat mysterious they had caused
This great and wondrous change.

Long did he walk
Amid the glories of the morn; then home
And slept till eve, when forth he stepped again
And saw the moon stand o'er the silent hills.
Strange thoughts once more thronged in his breast,
And as he slowly went, up through the trees
He glanced to see the night, and half aloud
Revealed his thought, which, had he written verse,
Had been set down in fashion for our tale:

The stars were blinking of his love, the moon
Looked down in pity for his love, the breeze
Was whispering in the leaves about his love.
Sudden he turned and strode vehemently:
"Heaven, what a love-lorn fool am I," cried he,
And fiercely stepped along to join his club.
A flush had come upon his cheek, and right
And left his blue eyes flashed.

Came forth
All friends, who shook his hand, rejoiced to see
Him well, and led him through the rooms to one
Where stood the tables spread with choicest viands
And richest wines, his long farewell to celebrate.
Down sat they all, and swiftly rolled the night
With mirth and song.

Broke in the room a fool,
A noted braggadocia—duellist:
His brain inflamed with brandy, vow he'd sworn

To some boon comrade o'er the billiard board
That he would join the party, though unasked.

One look, and then none deigned to see
The rude intrusion. Down plumped he on couch
All vacant, staring round with clever smile.

Annoyed that none looked to him, in his heart
The brutal spirit swelled. Our hero's dog
Sat near, and blinked in canine wonderment
Up in the stranger's face. The other dog,
Or cur, drew forth his fusee lights, and threw
With some dexterity one all ablaze
Into the dumb one's ear. The creature howled
With pain.

Uprose three stalwart youths, who saw
The fiendish deed. Each paused and looked to Maurice:
"My quarrel, gentlemen," said he, in tone
So low and calm as one might say Goodbye;

Then seized a cane, and thrashed the coward fool
Until his cries were louder than had been
The nobler brute's.

Out from the door he flung
The splintered cane, and after it thrust forth
The cur he'd whipped. Back to his seat he came
With frowning brow, and spake no word. Some deemed
His course too rough, and some deemed he'd done well
And rightly, for they knew 'twas not the first
Occasion that he'd known, although passed by,
Gross insult from that quarter. Divers there,
More thoughtful than the rest, had anxious care
Concerning consequence, and each with eye
Half-clouded, somewhat glanced from friend to friend.

"Come, gentlemen," said Maurice, with cleared air,
"Let not this incident disturb our mirth;
Yon fool hath stripes that he shall feel for days."

"Aye," said his neighbour, slowly, "that is true,
Provided always that ye shoot him not
Before the sun hath quite revealed his face."

The one to whom 'twas said glanced sharply toward
The speaker. Then broke o'er his handsome face
The sunniest smile had lit it up for months.
"Why, so," said he, and pushed his glass re-filled, away.
"But, Maurice," spoke a tim'rous friend,
"The rapier choose, since he must challenge thee;
His aim is deadly, and he slew, 'tis known,
Three whom he fought last year in Paris."
But Maurice only smiled, and rising asked
The time: 'Twas two hours past the night.

Another morn, another young May morn;
Again amid the bonnie woods and fields

Our scene is laid. The light is bad, the wind
Is somewhat chill; not like that other morn,
For such as that could never come atwain.

The trees sway somewhat ominous. Who's there,
Within that clearing in the wood? Three forms
That we have seen before, and two we know not.
Why, Maurice, friend, thou shouldst be sleeping now;
And prithee, why so pale, and why so stern?
And who is that thou watchest so, and what
Is that thou holdest in thy hand? Why, lad,
Thy eye is true, thy hand is firm, thy heart
Is sound. But what are these compared with use?
He'll shoot thee, Maurice, shoot thee—dead,
And we must stand and watch. The brutal soul,
That thrice has tasted blood, feels no remorse
In shedding thine.

Will nothing stay his hand?
Nothing. His flesh still twitcheth with the stripes

So new, which thou—thou, Maurice, gavest him
When like a mongrel cur thou whippedst him,
And scarce three hours ago.

A little bird
Cheeps plaintively among the sighing trees ;
A kerchief flutters to the ground, and all
The woods re-echo with the fearful note
Of pistols. Maurice falls. The other falls,
But rises swift and to his bleeding cheek,
Scored by our hero's lead, he claps with speed
His kerchief. There he bears the mark that ne'er
Shall leave him, and which he shall never hide.
Poor Maurice lies among his blood, which flows
From the left shoulder. O'er the Avenger's face
An ugly smile flits when he stands and sees
The surgeon stoop to Maurice ; then with friend
Almost himself as callous, hence he walks
And talks in exultation of the stripes
So fearfully re-paid.

And this the morn
Poor Maurice meant to leave his fatherland :
And all because a love which filled his breast
Had turned to bitterness. Yea, all because
A handsome girl, the sweetest in the world,
Had said in terms which he might not dispute
That he must give her up, that she could wed
Him never, and that they must part. The Fates
Decreed our hero should not sail, and there
He lies amid his blood, and from that spot
Would never move, save that his mourning friends
In bitterness and sorrow bear him hence.

Another morn, another young May morn ;
Again, yea, yet again, amid the fields
And woods our scene is laid. And who is this
That cometh o'er the hills ? O who is this
That cometh o'er the hills ? Most beautiful !

Not like the morn, but like that sweetest night
Of "cloudless climes" of which the poet sung.

O dearest girl, and prithee why so wan?
As if no sleep had visited those eyes—
Forth flashing glorious music on the morn—
For weary hours, and why that headlong haste?

With sweetest lips apart, and breathless, through
The wood she hastes, and through that dreadful glade
She shudders as she steps, not knowing why;
And to the little town she goes, and in
The morning street she pauses not, but toward
A house known well to her, though never yet
Has she been in its rooms. The iron gate
Swings to her touch, and up the garden steps
And through the door, and up the winding stair
She passes on. One little pause, her hand
To press, ungloved, against her trembling heart;
Then to a door, by instinct taught, she moves

And taps. 'Tis softly opened ; through she steps,
And glancing swiftly round the little room
Moves toward the couch. The doctor, nurse, and
friends,
Who form a little group, unnoticed stand :
" O love," she moaned, and knelt.

One little prayer
Broke from her heart, then toward the still white face,
Of him, her stricken lover, turned her glance.
As if in answer to her prayer he looked
To her, but from his fever-brightened eye
Came naught of recognition. Wearily
He closed them for some moments, then
He looked to her again, and laughed a low
Short laugh.

" Why, Katie, girl, how fares it now ?"
He said. " God, it was wild fierce work for you,
A gentle thing, to shoot me thus. Your friends,

My love, are fiends to prompt a deed like that.
Ten thousand devils crucify my flesh."

The doctor led the weeping girl aside;
"My dear," said he, a kind old man, "he raves
'Twas you who shot him, but that mood will pass,
And shortly."
"Will he die?" said Kate, and turned
All suddenly to meet the doctor's glance.
"Nay, nay, I think not," answered he.
"O pray,
Bid me to stay and nurse him. May I stay?"
"Why, you shall help, my dear," the doctor said;
"But come away just now; your nerves so tried
Require attention first, and you must rest."

Ten days of wracking fever drag away,
And Kate will neither eat nor sleep, and friends
And foes alike may not persuade her hence.

The doctor shook his head perplexed :

" If you

Remove her she will break her heart and die."

The fever passed at length, and Maurice slept,
And when he woke and slowly turned his head
His eyes were met by two of wondrous depth,
And yearning sympathy and sweetest love
Shone in them. Long he looked, then stretched
A thin white hand, and touched the pale young face,
Which smiled with joy.

" Why, Katie, sweet,

Then this is not a dream ?"

" Ah, no, dear love."

But Maurice only woke to say Farewell.
What needs the muse to linger in her tale ?
The icy hand is on our friend, and naught
Can save his life. That end not even Kate's

Sweet presence shall effect. Her tender words
And gentle touch shall naught avail. But she,
Poor girl, was bright and happy for some days.

Then came the dread relapse, and Kate looked on
In mute alarm, and in her eyes there grew
A far-off yearning look, and it was said
That two lives in the balance hung—not one.
He died, and Kate in silence watched, her glance
Still fixed upon the face, whose parting look
Had been for her. She neither spoke nor wept,
But when they took her hand she willingly
Went forth.

She sought her couch and seemed to sleep;
But in the early morn her anxious friends
Found she had stolen hence. In some alarm
A search ensued, and in the dead man's room
They found her kneeling, with her little head
Beside her silent lover's. Kate was dead.

And was it not far better so? O say:
But tell me not that 'twas not better so;
For who shall mend a broken heart? And life
Is very long when hope has passed.

POEMS.

1872-84.

DEDICATED

TO

S. AND S. M.

Away with these ; true wisdom's world will be
Within its own creation, or in thine,
Maternal Nature.

CHANGED, THO' CHANGELESS.

Her presence shall uplift thy thoughts from earth,
As to the sunshine and the pure bright air
Their tops the green trees lift.

The Spirit of Poetry is not dead,
Nor fled away—but just as young, and fair,
And beautiful, as years ago she hovers round.
Yet shy, more sweetly shy, than once;
And few indeed shall know the silent thrills
Of deep and precious joy, deigned but to those
Who love her well. The gibbering fools who crowd
Our street—rushing for what they ne'er shall find,
Whose hearts can ne'er be touched save thro'

Their pockets,—these have made her shy; and one
Or two, who but for these would love her well,
Treat her with scant respect; and tho' their hearts
She never wholly leaves, aloof she stands.

O grant that in the years to come, as now,
Still may I hear her in the whispering breeze,
Still may I see her in the bonnie stars,
Still may I hear her in the murmuring sea;
And here and there—the sweetest thing of all—
Still may I find her in a human face,
And know that, through some sentence lightly dropped,
She moves unknown the thought of her or him
Who speaks, half wondering why the heart is stirred.

THE CUSHAT.

This evening, as I paced a shady lane,
I heard the wild doves in the wood complain;
Anon the fox's bark spoke sharp and clear,
And fain I lingered nigh the trees to hear:
But not a sound was to my ears conveyed
For some few moments after I delayed.
I stood in slight surprise, not knowing how
To read the silence in each bush and bough;
To pierce the bushes with my sight I tried,
In vain, no thing of life was there descried.
Then from the inmost trees I heard again
In silent joy, the cushat's low, sweet strain.
How shall I tell the feelings of my heart—
The thoughts that came upon me how impart?
Though trained to town-life, Nature's every scene
Much loved from early age by me has been;
Yet never till that moment had I known
How deep within my breast that love had grown.

THE BURN.

Adown by the burn,
I love to turn,
When none but myself is nigh;
And watch it dash,
With its musical splash,
So merrily, merrily by.

High slopes the ground,
On all sides round,
For the climber far too steep;
And ne'er will you find,
The fierce north wind,
Adown this valley to leap.

While forth on its way,
This brooklet so gay,
All noisily dashes along;
Full well does it know,
The way it must go,
And never for once goes it wrong.

O tell me I pray,
O tell me to-day,
Thou merry wild burn tell to me:
Some secret thou know'st,
Which man cannot boast,
I pray thee now tell it to me.

I look to the right,
Where it first comes in sight,
And watch it come rippling near;
It climbs o'er the stones,
Or around them it runs,
If high from the surface they rear.

And it laughingly glances,
As by me it dances ;
I'll swear that it laughs in my face !
No being on earth,
Could feel aught of dearth,
If he stood on its banks a short space.

I've stood on thy banks,
And watched thy gay pranks,
Till merry as thou I've become ;
And own a wild wish,
To joyously rush,
With thee to thy distant home.

O tell me I pray,
O tell me to day,
Thou merry wild burn tell to me :
Some secret thou know'st,
Which man cannot boast,
I pray thee now tell it to me.

LUNA.

Ye scores of clouds, that all the livelong day
  Have driven in swift career across the sky,
Sailing and crowding in each other's way—
  Fleeing as though some dreaded foe were nigh ;
Why is it when night serene falls over hill,
  And dale, and all the earth reclines in peace,
Why is it ye slower float, soon hanging still,
  As though your foe the driving chase did cease ?

When that majestic godlike face forth treads,
  And silent mounts up through the still, soft night,

Do you in reverence bow your silver heads,
And linger with respect within its light?
And feel within it that you need not fear
Pursuing foe, from earth, or other sphere?

Perhaps your more gifted intellect doth know
What my awed heart to me is whispering low:
That God Himself is in that globe of fire,
And whilst His mortal works to rest retire,
With careful, loving watch doth guard them all,
That in their sleep no harm on them may fall.

THE EVERLASTING ARMS.

O bonnie flowers, I've loved them long,
And years will make that love more strong,
For underneath are the everlasting arms.

The pretty stars that sweetly shine,
Serene—not like this breast of mine,
For underneath are the everlasting arms.

The eternal hills, I love them well,
For deep, deep thoughts among them dwell,
And underneath are the everlasting arms.

O seas that rage, and seas that sleep,
O smiling skies, and skies that weep,
Tho' underneath are the everlasting arms.

O flowers and stars, and hills and sea,
None loves you as you're loved by me,
For underneath are the everlasting arms.

But the bonnie flowers, I love them best,
The flowers that bring me peace and rest,
And underneath are the everlasting arms.

FRAGMENT.

O the moon came out as swift they flew,
The plains and streams all splendour knew;
The hills tower'd o'er and approved as they passed,
The glens wondered much at their speed unsurpassed;
The woods echoed loud as they thundered along,
All live creatures fled as they thundered among.

When at length they reached the plain of sand
The silvery clouds looked down and smiled;
The silver-peaked hills saw the sight so grand,
The black frowning forest looked stern and wild,
And moaned with rage to the chill night wind;
They were soon left behind, out of sight, out of mind.

O'er leagues, and leagues, and leagues again,
Without relaxing speed, they sped ;
Oft, and oft, and oft again,
The traveller paled at their thundering tread,
And, while his own steed backed with a startled prance,
He watched them pass with a quivering glance,
And uttered a prayer that Heav'n would spare
Him ever from such a sight of dread,
For he deemed it one from the land of the dead.

O'er leagues, and leagues, and leagues again,
Without relaxing speed, they sped ;
O'er hill and dale, o'er plain, through glen,
They flew until the east was red,
And morn came from her rosy bed.

I WANDERED FAR.

I wandered far along the shore
  One eve, with slow and lingering pace ;
The moon was full, and o'er and o'er
  I paused to look upon her face ;
Such sweet, sad beauty ne'er before
  Did mortal in her features trace.

I looked upon the silvery sea,
  And felt my soul moved at the sight ;

A ripple scarcely could I see,
The summer breezes were so light;
How wretched is the glare of day,
Compared, thought I, with lovely night,

And I could wish the day's proud sun
Might never glare on me again,
But 'neath the light, now softly thrown,
I e'er might wander, free from pain;
Or float the silvery sea upon,
And with the fairies there remain.

O SPLENDID.

O splendid is the day—the sky
Is blue on every side,
And the lovely fairy clouds on high
Do sweetly onward glide.

On all the housetops to be seen
The slates like silver show,
Awaking pangs my heart within,
The reason scarce I know.

And along the walls the shadows creep,
In peaceful, gentle play;
And the windows in the sunlight sleep,
O happy things are they.

Far, far up in the clouds I see
Birds sailing in the blue;
O creatures blest of liberty,
Would I were one of you!

MID NATURE'S SCENES.

Disturb me not, disturb me not;
Thy converse cease,
Sit down in peace;
Disturb me not.

The sound of the river is in my ear,
And birds without number are singing near;
I can feel the warm beams of the glorious sun,
And I know that the clouds on high
Serenely and sweetly are smiling beneath,
Those lovely clouds in the sky.

And I know that a wood close beside us doth rest,
Whose beauty none other surpasses;
And I know that the country around us is blest
With a peace and repose little known to man's breast,
O let me be silent, me never molest,
Disturb me not;
Converse at present my soul distresses.

I believe that the joy those in Paradise know
Far, far will exceed all we meet here below;
But a small comprehension's the human mind's lot,
And a bliss than this greater 'tis hard to conceive;
Therefore, I pray thee, disturb me not.

FRAGMENT.

A gravestone stands the swelling wave beside,
Near to that spot where I did long reside :
Oft, as I wandered on the sandy shore,
And heard the billows purl, or wildly roar,
Oft did I pause beside this mournful stone,
That sadly rearing, silent stands alone,
And pondering o'er it sought in vain to know
Whose buried bones lay mouldering down below.
Some strange, wild whim it was that placed a grave
Beside the restless and unsilent wave,
Nor left aught nigh the marvel to explain,
Nor tell if dukes or beggars there be lain.
Methought no souls, whose bodies rested there,
Could be at peace and void of every care ;

Methought at night they'd wander 'neath the moon
And in the wind moan an ungracious tune;
Or when the storm was raging near the beach
Methought they'd add a wild, unearthly screech
Unto the roaring, striking him with fear
Who dared to pause where it might reach his ear.

The stone, close-scanned, conveyed not any name,
Nor taught the gazer whence the lifeless came.
One only line was on its surface wrought,
And nor of kin, nor aught of nation, taught.
A sad, sad line that added to the gloom
And mystery that circled round the tomb;
A deep-cut line, that seemed to shrink through fright
Inward, as though it dreaded mortal sight;
And wierd the story which it did convey:

Here lie who loved, yet did each other slay.

O doleful words, mysterious thing to read!
What caused thy being, what strange tragic deed?

If loved, why were they by each other slain ?
How oft the truth I asked, but asked in vain !
The seagull's scream came from the seaward sky,
The startled fish leapt from the wave on high ;
The waves purled onward : All these knew, methought,
But feared that any should the tale be taught ;
As if remembrance of it so did pain,
Composure they for long might not regain.

THERE ARE HOURS.

There are hours when my life seems full of grief,
And all is dark for evermore ;
O, how can I smile when my heart is sick,
And all seems dark for evermore ?

But a beautiful face has power e'er me,
And beautiful thoughts have far, far more ;
And a beautiful poem has shown me heaven
When all seemed dark for evermore.

O, how could we live in this weary world,
If the end of things were here ?
But grief is given to teach our hearts
That God is near—is very near.

Unlovely, eerie, dreary, dark November,
Who loves November, bleak and dark November?
But every cloud a silver lining knows,
And gleams of sunlight come in dark November,

When God looked round for some sweet thing to send
To cheer your little world one dark November,
And fixed on you—a brighter, bonnier gleam
Ne'er dropped from heaven in that sad month, November.

And in the future may you be as good—
Whilst birthdays pass as happy may you be—
As you are beautiful. And who could wish
You more.

IN THE SPRING.

O the grass was so green and the sky was so blue,
And the bonnie white clouds were so fleecy and few,
And the broad shining river so slowly did crawl,
One scarce could discern if it journeyed at all;

And I wandered along with my love by my side,
And we looked to the west by the setting sun dyed,
And we listed the birds in their sweet revelry,
And I spoke not nor spoke my dear love unto me;

For the sweet little sigh that my pretty one sighed
Said a thousand times more than vows, gifts, all beside;
And my tongue had no words that would serve to reveal
All the love that my bosom that evening could feel.

AND WHY.

And why was I sad ? But I may not say why,
Though beautiful things are a rapture to me ;
Yet when I remember, 'tis only to sigh,
And stifle the wish for what never must be.

Dear girl, would you knew, but you never shall know
Of the pain that your sweetness has given ;
'Twas a glimpse, with the gate shutting surely, tho' slow,
'Twas a glimpse at the splendour of heaven.

'Twixt the gloaming and the mirk.

I have seen the bonniest girl in the world,
  But I dare not write her name,
And I walked with her and talked with her,
  Till the twilight softly came.

And I peeped in her eyes and she smiled in mine,
  My bonniest of bonnie girls ;
And her eyes were diamonds when she smiled,
  And her lovely teeth were pearls.

To ———

With a bunch of Forget-me-Nots.

Sweetheart, these flowers will fade away,
Their bloom depart;
Not like my love, for that must stay
Forever in my heart.

Then need I say Forget-me-Not,
My own sweet Fate?
Ah, no! for while you've life and thought
You never can forget.

WINTER: (A Song).

O where are the scents that filled the air,
And the breeze that whispered low?
O where is your foliage, giants bare,
There's a heart that longs to know?

And the fleecy clouds that hung in the sky,
And the hum of the busy bee,
And the sweet, sweet song of the lark on high,
O where are they fled? Tell me.

Sweet birds and flowers, where are ye gone?
Too soon did ye steal away;
And chilled is the aching heart of one
Who fain would have bid ye stay.

Chill moans the blast, the sky grows dark,
And the rain falls heavily;
'Tis in vain that ye list for the song of the lark,
And the hum of the busy bee.

The fleecy clouds have changed their form,
The very sun is changed;
No whispering breeze steals by—the storm
Roars forth like a giant deranged.

Fell Winter has strode from the distant hills,
He has come through each wood and each field,
And all that shall meet him he chills or he kills,
The bravest and strongest must yield.

O THROBBING BREAST.

O throbbing breast, O weary breast,
O proud, proud heart;
Around the moon the sweet clouds rest,
Now close beside, and now apart.

The night is very beautiful,
So beautiful, so beautiful;
And yet it is not beautiful,
'Tis almost horrible.

Soft and low is the whispering wind,
So sweet and low, so soft and low;
Yet cruel to one, aye, most unkind,
Whispering of time—not long ago,

SO YOUNG.

So young, so sweet, so very fair,
  How swift the time flies when she's nigh ;
And when she's gone I think of her,
  And sigh.

Around her absent form a light,
  Of something more than earth, is thrown,
That, when she comes within our sight,
  Is mellowed down.

THE CLOUDS MAY FROWN.

The clouds may frown, obscuring all,
Both fields and woods, and hills so tall;
The wind may blow, the rain may fall,
If I may come to thee.

I care not now the fields to pace,
I care not Nature's scenes to trace,
If I may view thy pretty face,
'Tis all in all to me.

I CANNOT CONCEIVE.

I cannot conceive how so fair a thing
  May exist as mortals do,
And meet all the trials that age shall bring,
  And the change that must surely ensue.

And yet I know well that a thousand as fair,
  Have lived, and live now, and in future shall live,
And each with her own little burden to bear—
  The cares and the trials her mission doth give.

WHEN I BADE.

When I bade her farewell on that sorrowful day,
She wept not, nor even gave vent to a sigh;
But the glance which she gave me when turning away,
'Tis engraved on my heart, 'twill be there when I die.

When the night closes round and the stars peep in sight,
My sighs are redoubled in thinking of thee;
That form which I viewed with such joy and delight,
Full oft at this hour how distinctly I see.

O WAS IT.

O was it her beautiful, beautiful eyes,
Or was it her perfect mouth ?
Or the prettiest form that God could devise
To perfect the charms of her youth ?
Or was it her voice ? But I may not surmise,
And I might not say the truth.

But the trance that came over me would not depart
As I gazed on her beautiful face,
And the feeling of sadness that stole in my heart
Was all that its flight would replace ;
Yet why was I sad ? But I may not impart,
Nor yet the remembrance efface.

THE FLOWERS AND THE FIELDS.

The flowers and the fields, and the hills and the woods,
I have loved with a love that's akin to disease ;
And the rain and the wind in their various moods
Have told me dear tales from the sensitive trees.

And these I love now, but not, not as of old,
For the dreams that now sleep I might almost despise,
And thrillings far deeper than these could unfold
Have their birth in a glance from her soul-speaking eyes.

A DISTANT DAY.

In a Lady's Album.

A distant day will surely come
When this, your book, shall be complete;
Some of the writers distant roam,
And some you never more shall meet.

O when that day has journeyed here,
Pause o'er each page, with memories fraught;
Some claim a sigh, and some a tear,
Pass not o'er mine without a thought.

BY COLOURS INTERMINGLED.

In a Lady's Album.

By colours intermingled, so and so,
What beauteous things the hand of man can form.

A lovely face on canvas I have seen ;
I stood and gazed entranced for long, but still
It would not smile the more, or smile the less ;
Nor would it blush, nor turn away, and so
It could not move this heart of mine. I know
One breathing, moving, sweet warm face and form
Were worth ten thousand cold, dead paintings.

OLD TIME.

In a Lady's Album.

Old Time is stealing slowly on,
The world sees changes every day;
Some friends remain, but some are gone,
Are dead, or wandered far away.

Alas for those who leave no mark
By which their names we may retain;
Remembrance of them soon grows dark,
Ere long a trace may not remain.

Then gladly do I take my pen
To write these verses and my name,
For now I know, where'er I go,
Upon your thoughts I've fixed a claim.

L'AVENIR.

In a Lady's Album.

The breeze that through the window strayed,
A landscape for the first time seen,
A chord of music softly played,
Oft speak of something that has been.

The thought scarce lives before forgot—
As transient, fleeting, as a breath;
And if 'twere asked of what we thought,
We could not tell from then till death.

But friends leave records firm and clear;
And though the sea may roll between,
And time has added year on year,
Not quite forgot is all that's been.

And though to-day's events grow dim,
When o'er these leaves some care you show
A passing thought may be for him,
The friend, perchance, of long ago.

'TIS PLEASANT.

In a Lady's Album.

'Tis pleasant when we journey from the house,
And wander forth upon familiar ground—
'Tis sweet to know the sight of us shall rouse
A smile of joy from some who look around.

But when we know that miles away from home
Dwell one or two who keep us in their thoughts,
Then life is not the dreary place to roam
Some say, but has its share of pleasant spots.

Then gladly do I write these verses here,
For they shall serve to keep me in your mind;
They bring their own reward—to me 'tis dear
That with things dead my name is not resigned.

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